REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge receipt of an Office Communication dated October 8, 2002, wherein the Patent Office alleges that the reply received on August 2, 2002 "is not fully responsive to the Prior Office Action" because the reply allegedly fails to discuss the rejection of claim 14 and 16 under the first paragraph of section 112. Consequently, Applicants are provided with a ONE month period of time to attend to the alleged omission noted above.

At the outset, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended to the undersigned by way of the outstanding Office Communication. Applicants sincerely apologize for any inconvenience caused the Office by Applicants' perceived omission.

With respect to the 112 rejections as set forth in the office Action dated February 27, 2002, Applicants respectively submit that the above requested amendments to claims 14 and 16 are sufficient to negate the grounds for the outstanding rejection.

In view of the amendment herein presented, it is respectfully submitted that each point raised by the Examiner has been attended to. As such, reversal of the rejection on grounds of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph is hereby respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in proper form for allowance and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would be of value, he is requested to call the undersigned counsel at the number listed below.

Any additional fees required in connection with this submission may be taken from Merck Deposit Account No. 13-2755.

Respectfully submitted,

By _____

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Date: October 29, 2002

VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

14. (2x amended) A method for determining whether a substance binds $GABA_B$ receptors and is thus a potential agonist or antagonist of the $GABA_B$ receptor that comprises:

(a) providing cells comprising an expression vector encoding HG20 and an expression vector encoding $GABA_BR1a$ or $GABA_BR1b$, wherein said expression vector encoding HG20 comprises the isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 1;

(b) culturing the cells under conditions such that HG20 and $GABA_BR1a$ or $GABA_BR1b$ are expressed and heterodimers of HG20 and $GABA_BR1a$ or $GABA_BR1b$ are formed;

(c) exposing the cells to a labeled ligand of $GABA_B$ receptors in the presence and in the absence of the substance;

(d) measuring the binding of the labeled ligand to the heterodimers of HG20 and $GABA_BR1a$ or $GABA_BR1b$;

where if the amount of binding of the labeled ligand is less in the presence of the substance than in the absence of the substance, then the substance is a potential agonist or antagonist of $GABA_B$ receptors.

16. (2x amended) A method of producing functional $GABA_B$ receptors in cells comprising:

(a) transfecting cells with:

(1) an expression vector [comprising DNA] that encodes an HG20 protein under conditions favoring expression of HG20 in the cells [;] ,wherein said expression vector comprises the isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 1; and

(2) an expression vector comprising DNA that encodes $GABA_BR1a$ or $GABA_BR1b$ under conditions favoring expression of $GABA_BR1a$ or $GABA_BR1b$ in the cells; and

(b) culturing the cells under conditions such that heterodimers of HG20 and $GABA_BR1a$ or $GABA_BR1b$ are formed where the heterodimers constitute functional $GABA_B$ receptors.